



1348 So. VANNESS

ANOTHER GLORIOUS
VICTORIAN ALLIANCE
HOUSE TOUR

Sunday 5 October, 1980

1 to 5 PM

6 HOUSES
ON
SAN FRANCISCO'S
GRAND
"MANSION ROW"
of the
1880's

VICTORIAN ALLIANCE
4143 23rd Street San Francisco, Ca. 94114



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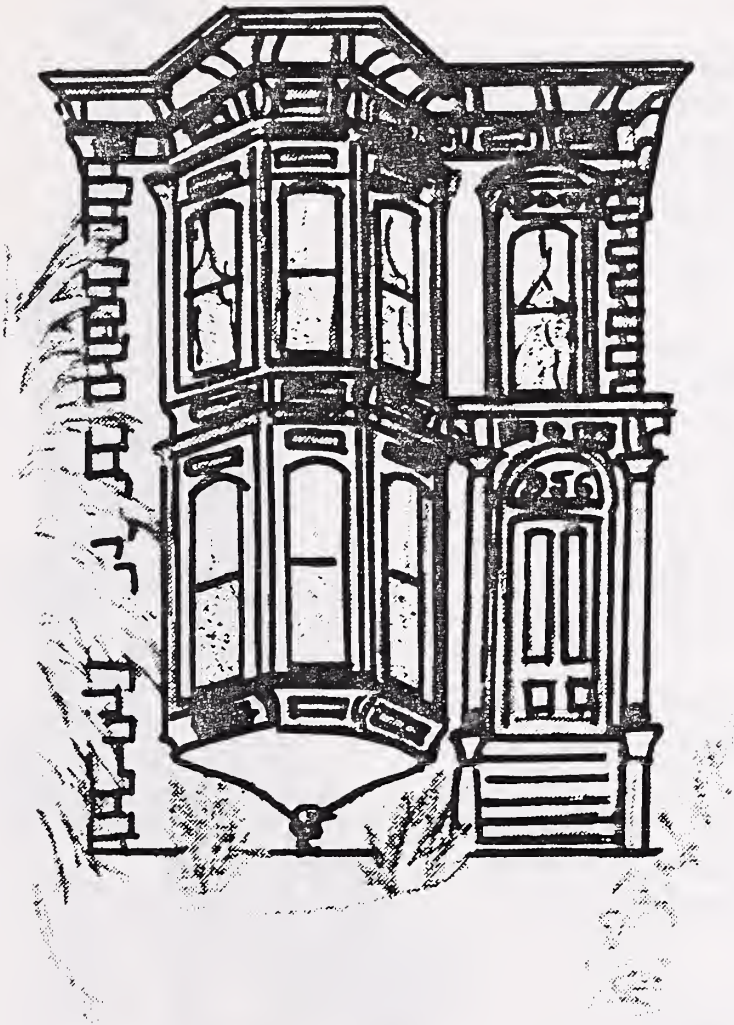
Welcome to the Victorian Alliance House Tour of the grand houses of the "Mansion Row" of the City in the 1880's. South Van Ness Avenue, originally named Howard Street until 1939, was home to many of the business, professional and social leaders of a century ago. Here, on multiple lots, they built their spacious houses, frequently including large coach houses on the grounds. Now, after years of deterioration and varied uses for many of the buildings, they are enjoying a renaissance, with renovations which add present-day amenities to the increasingly rare architectural distinction of the past.

The Victorian Alliance was formed in 1972 by residents of San Francisco who were concerned about the mindless demolition of distinguished buildings in the name of "progress." The primary thrust of the Alliance is the preservation and renovation of Victorian structures. Meetings, held on the last Wednesday of each month, feature speakers who discuss the techniques of Victorian restoration. All are invited to attend. There is also a reference file of craftspeople and sources of material which is available for members' convenience. In addition, the Alliance participates actively in the Landmarks Designation process of the City.

As an all-volunteer organization, with no paid staff, the Alliance is able to donate the proceeds from these fund-raising events to various restoration funds. We have contributed generously to the Windmill Restoration Fund, supported the long-time legal efforts to save the City of Paris Building, made contributions to the furnishing of the Camron-Stanford House in Oakland, and numerous other projects. For further information, address:

The Victorian Alliance
4143 23rd Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94114

The owners welcome you to their houses and are glad to answer any questions you may have. In courtesy to the owners, it is requested that there be no smoking in the houses.



The extant water records on this house are later than the simple 1870's Italianate style of this building with the old palm tree in the garden. A letter dated 1883 found in the house places the family of Henry F. Williams, real estate, in the house, then numbered 2422 Howard Street. A drawing of another house that was found in this house had F. Williams as architect. A poster in the house had H. F. Williams & Co., real estate agents, in the A. J. Stevenson's Bldg., 501 California and 335 Montgomery.

The bay on the side of the house indicates that the house originally had a side garden. The front bay's sloping underside terminates in a broad finial against the original brick foundation.

The design of the front of the house indicates that instead of scattering elaboration all over the bay, the builder preferred to spend his discretionary money on the portico. The round-headed transom and the encircling thick moldings are very handsome, and rare, as is the original four-panel door.

Because of its in-house traffic problems, it is impossible to open the room in this house which is most important from the remodeler's viewpoint. Up a steep, narrow stair, under the high gables of the house, there is one large room--the entire top floor. It is serene and secluded from the chaos and plaster dust which are the chief characteristics of every remodeling job. Experienced remodelers have long known that the creation of such a haven in which to escape the woes of the remodeling job is one of the most important parts of the project. Pictures of this house-top aerie are on display.

1348 South Van Ness

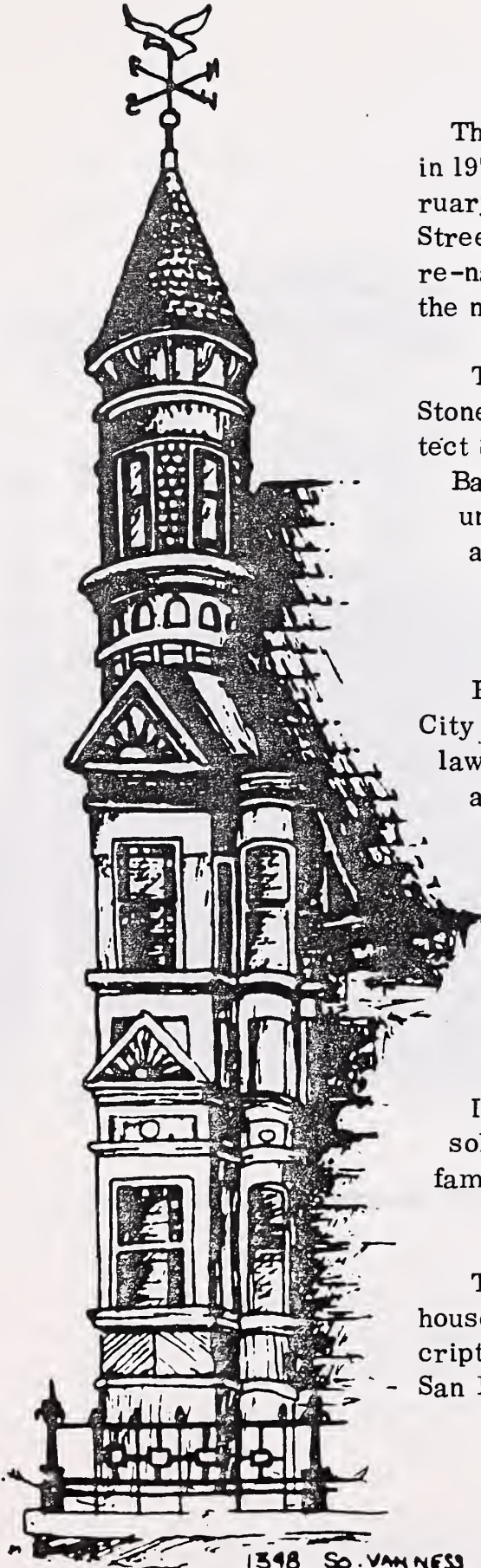
This house, designated San Francisco Landmark #74 in 1975, was connected to the City water system on February 5, 1886. Originally, it was numbered 2818 Howard Street, later 2848 Howard, then, in 1939, with the street re-named South Van Ness Avenue, the house was assigned the number 1348 which it has had ever since.

The house was built by prominent attorney Frank M. Stone, a native of New England, from a design by architect Seth Babson, one of the leading architects of the time. Babson had lived and worked in Sacramento from 1850 until about 1870, where he designed both the Stanford and the Crocker (now the Crocker Art Gallery) houses. He lived later, from about 1870, until his death in 1907, in Alameda.

For a time, Stone served as District Attorney of the City and County of San Francisco. In 1882, he became the law partner of A. A. Sargent, former Minister to Germany, and former U. S. Senator. His distinguished private practice handled many cases which achieved public and legal notice.

After the earthquake of 1906, the house was purchased by Wm. Larkins of Larkins & Company, manufacturers of carriages, whose descendant firm, Larkins Bros. Tire Company, 370 South Van Ness, still exists. In 1915, after the death of William Larkins, the house was sold to John Sullivan. Since 1922 the house has been in the family of the present owner.

The architectural glories of this spectacular Queen Anne house have been elaborately chronicled, since a detailed description appeared early on in "Artistic Homes of California," San Francisco Newsletter, 1888.



1381 South Van Ness

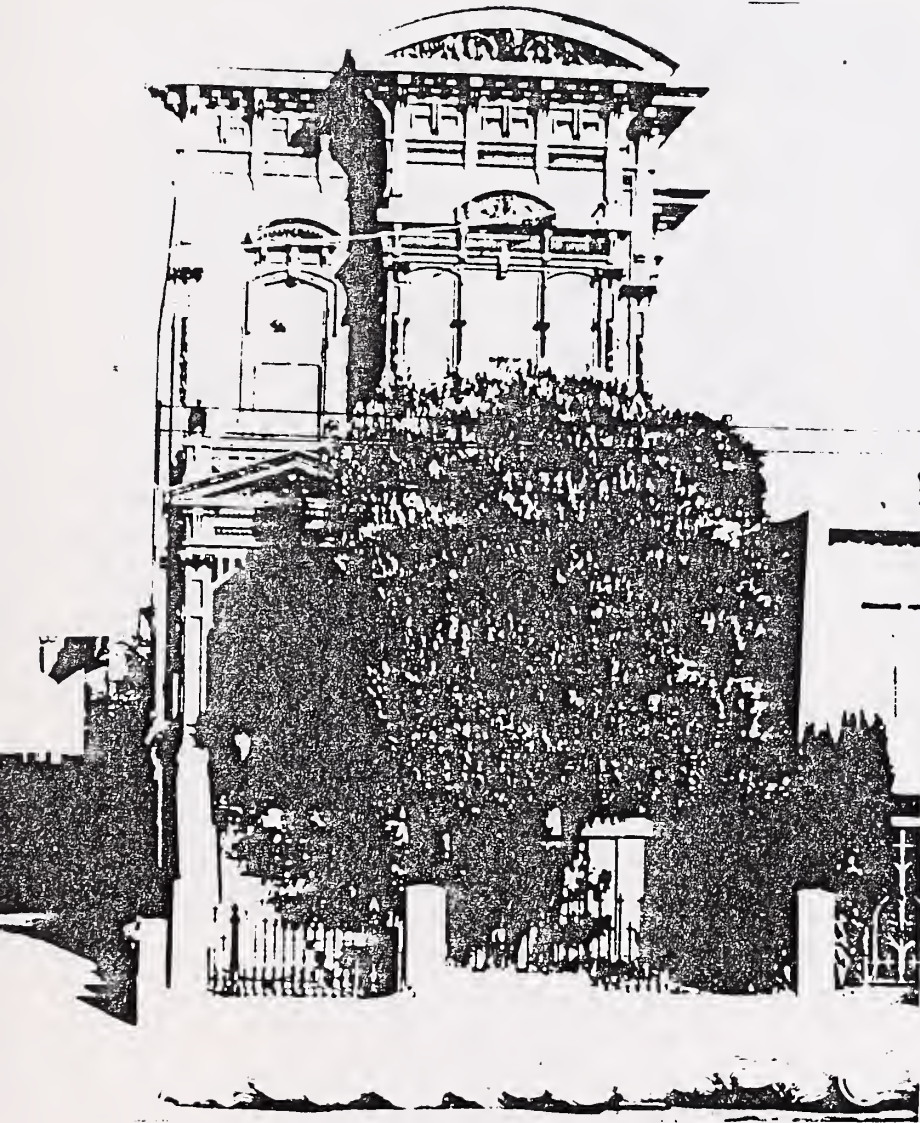
When an architect designs for himself, he designs superbly, and such is the case in this house, which architect Charles I. Havens designed for himself in 1884. Water service was connected on 28 October of that year.

The house was built on a double lot with the now very decrepit coach house to the right rear as a part of the original property. You will see in this house a somewhat condensed version of a similar, but larger house by the same architect in partnership with Peter Schmidt, doing business as Schmidt & Havens, at 943 South Van Ness, two houses later in this tour. The richly colored glass panels in the doors of this house match beautifully the glass in the lantern in the front hall which a previous owner brought from Germany and installed just four years ago.

Havens, who served as City Architect for twelve years, was the designer of many important turn-of-the-century buildings, including the Ohlandt house at 603 Steiner, in 1891.

In the partnership of Havens & Toepke, he designed the San Francisco Yacht Club of 1897, Mission High School (1909), San Mateo Elks Lodge (1908). His downtown San Francisco buildings include the Bartlett Doe Building, 153 Kearny (1909), the Flatiron building at Market, Sutter and Sansome (1913), and the Maskey Building, 48-52 Kearny Street (1908).

There is a neighborhood tradition that the coach house of this property served as a public food outlet at the time of the earthquake, when in-house cooking was prohibited because of the danger of fire.



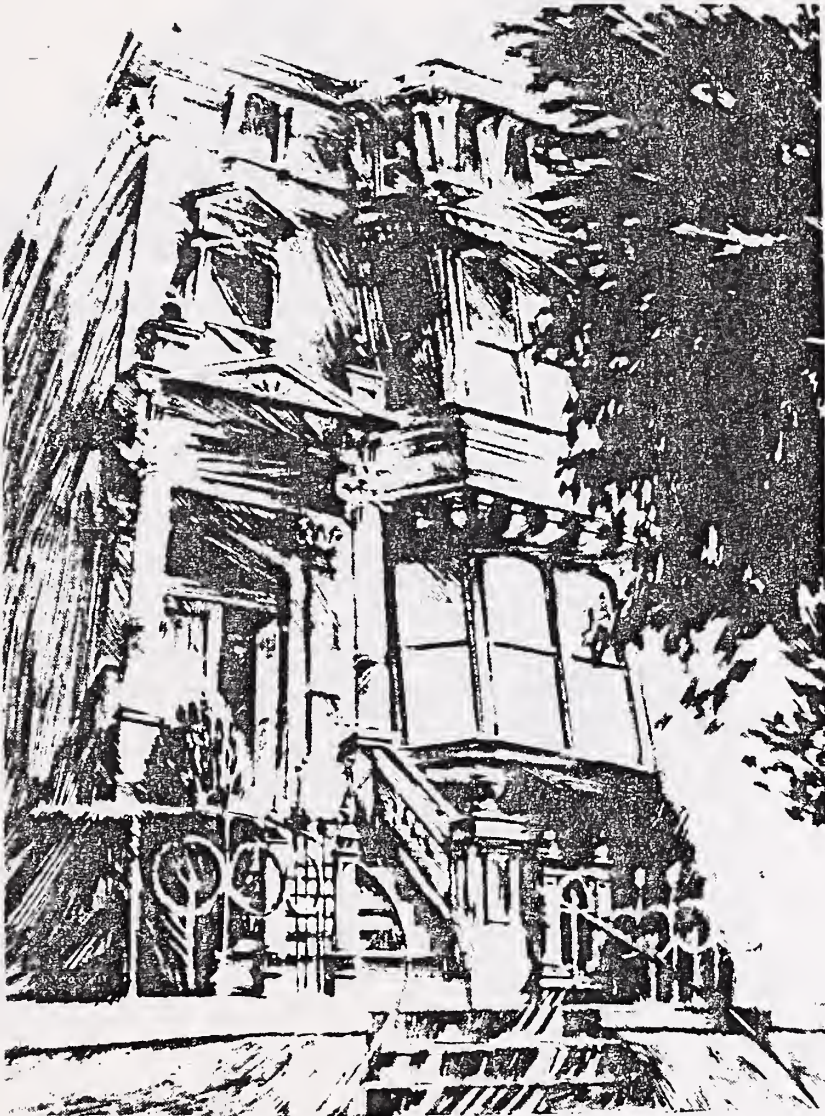
This two-family house, which cost \$6,000 to build in 1881, was connected to the City water system on November 23 of that year. The house was built for Samuel F. Weeks, originally operator of the only oakum factory in San Francisco. In 1856 the ship chandlery firm of S. F. Weeks Co. was established. This firm, for many years known as Weeks, Howe & Emerson Co., is still in business, 124 years old.

The house was built on a 60 foot lot which as late as 1909 had not been sub-divided. J. S. Behrens is listed as the architect, but no other records of his existence have been found.

The house is an elaborate Italianate with fine detailing which continues around on the right side of the house, which would have originally overlooked the garden on the southern part of the lot. The windows have unusual frames, surmounted by pediments.



The front bay is decorated with slender colonettes on both floors which emphasize the vertical elegance of this Italianate facade. Note also the many-bracketed minor cornice between the two floors of the bay which is repeated as the cornice over the front portico. The present owners have just completed the fine quality restoration of the balustraded front stairway with the corinthian-capped fluted columns which are typical of this style.



This is the second house designed by Charles I. Havens which you will see on this tour. The house, connected to City water service on June 11, 1885, was built for John F. English. The building cost \$10,500 and was built on three lots at what was 2417 Howard Street.

English was well known as a commission merchant, and was instrumental in establishing the first produce network on the west coast. He was referred to as the "Potato King" of San Francisco because of his investments in potato commodities.

The three original lots of this property, besides providing space for the large house (24 rooms) also included a stable for his race horses. This was at a time when horse-racing was popular at Hunter's Point.

English's widow, Wilhelmina, owned the property until 1906, when she sold it, having already sold off part of the property, where additional houses were built.

The house itself became a fifteen-unit hotel-guest house, with kitchenettes installed in most of the units. Fortunately, even with all these interior changes, the interior woodwork was left intact.

All of the exterior trim had been removed and replaced by stucco over chicken wire when the present owners bought the house in 1977. Their facade restoration project was greatly aided by the restorers' ability to reconstruct quite accurately the original facade ornamentation from the painted silhouettes which remained when the original gingerbread was removed. These traces, protected by the wire and stucco, are almost as good as a photograph to enable experienced restorers to install a very accurate reproduction of the original trim.



Water Department records show that this exuberant Queen Anne house was connected to the City water service on July 1, 1889.

Just as we have suggested that architect Charles Havens may have used his own house as a sample of his work for his clients, so might John Coop, the builder of this house, have done with this building.

Coop was manager of the San Francisco Planing Mill at Fifth and Bryant when he built this house, originally numbered 2425 Howard Street, on two lots.

A spectacular example of the product of the planing mill is the main staircase, which is said to have cost \$3,000, an amount that would have built a quite satisfactory complete house at that time.

The planing mill was destroyed in 1906, and shortly afterwards, Coop sold his house to a man named Homer Wilson.

Wilson, a "Financier" who was involved in mining activities, sold the house in 1910 to Dr. Ernest Johannson, who sold the south garden a short time later, where flats were built in 1912.

The house underwent several changes after the doctor began the process by converting rooms in the house to "housekeeping" units as his children married and left home.

The present owner purchased the house in 1970 and embarked on the renovation of the building which still continues. It is hoped that all will be finished in time for a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the house in 1989.

P -- PARKING, 976 South Van Ness

1 -- 956 S. Van Ness

~~2 -- 1816 S. Van Ness~~

~~3 -- 1381 S. Van Ness~~

~~4 -- 989 S. Van Ness~~

~~5 -- 948 S. Van Ness~~

~~6 -- 959 S. Van Ness~~

